

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7012R

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 13282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: PMAC CHAIRMEN RETURN -- AS FIGUREHEADS?

REF: ADDIS ABABA 12965

1. ETHIOPIAN NEWSPAPER OF NOVEMBER 11 GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE OF PMAC CHAIRMAN AND TWO VICE CHAIRMEN RECEIVING MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. STROY ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOS WHICH SHOW BG TEFERI, AND DOUR-LOOKING V/CHAIRMEN. SINCE TWO V/CHAIRMEN HAVE APPEARED IN PRESS ONLY TWICE IN THE LAST 25 DAYS (SEE REFTTEL), TODAY'S COVERAGE MAY WELL ONCE AGAIN BE DESIGNED TO QUELL RUMORS AS TO STATUS OF TWO MEN.

2. FIRLY RELIABLE ESTABLISHED SOURCE WITH REGULAR DIRG ACCESS CONTENTS THAT TWO V/CHAIRMEN HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF ANY POWERS BEYOND THAT OF ORDINARY DIRG MEMBERS. THEY DO, HOWEVER, RETAIN FIGUREHEAD POSITION AND AS SUCH, STILL SIGN DOCUMENTS APPROVED AND SUBMITTED TO THEM BY DIRG SUBCOMMITTEES. ACCORDING TO THIS  
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SOURCE, RESULT OF RECENT DIRG CRISIS IS THAT TEFERI BANTE HAS

BECOME MORE OF A LEADER WITHIN THE DIRG AND IS CLOSELY SUPPORTED BY CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL GIZAW BELAYNEH. DIRG COLLEGIUM, HOWEVER, REMAINS THE CONTROLLING AUTHORITY FOR ALL DECISIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, LONG STANDING RIVALRY BETWEEN MENGISTU AND ATENAFU CAME TO A HEAD WHEN PATRIARCH OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, ABUNE TEWOFILOS, REQUESTED MENGISTU'S CONCURRENCE IN HIS PLAN TO CONSECRATE THREE ADDITIONAL BISHOPS. MANGISTU ALLEGEDLY OPPOSED THE ABUNE'S REQUEST CONTENDING THAT "THE PEOPLE" DID NOT NEED THREE MORE HIGH LIVING BISHOPS AND THE ATTENDANT EXPENSES. REPORTEDLY, THE ABUNE THEN APPROACHED HIS FELLOW GOJJAMI LT. COL. ATENAFU, WHO REPROACHED THE ABUNE FOR TAKING THE MATTER TO MANGISTU BECAUSE IT WAS IN HIS (ATENAFU'S) AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, AND THEN APPROVED THE ABUNE'S PLAN. (FYI. THE BISHOPS WERE CONSECRATED IN LATE SEPTEMBER IN A QUIET CEREMONY WHICH RECEIVED NO PUBLICITY IN GOVERNMENT MEDIA. ANNOUNCEMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE OF THE APPOINTMENTS. WE BELIEVE ONE OF THE THREE NEWLY CONSECRATED BISHOPS TO BE UNDER DETENTION AND THE ABUNE, HIMSELF, UNDER SAME FORM OF HOUSE ARREST, WHICH LEADS CREDENCE TO THIS STORY. END FYI.) MANGISTU, ON LEARNING THAT ATENAFU HAD CONTERMANNED HIS DECISION, WAS INFURIATED. THIS LED TO CONFRONTATION AND OCTOBER 18 DIRG CRISIS WHICH WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED.

4. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, DIRG CRISIS WAS COMPOUNDED BECAUSE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL GIZAW BELAYNEH, ATTEMPTED TO RESIGN AT THIS TIME, CITING INDISCIPLINE OF THE TROOPS (PRIVATES ARRESTING OFFICERS FOR GIVING UNPOPULAR ORDERS), AND FACT THAT DIRG MEMBER FREQUENTLY BYPASSED HIM IN ORDERING DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY UNITS. REPORTEDLY ON ONE OCCASION, A DIRG MEMBER ORDERED THE DEPLOYMENT OF 2,000 TROOPS TO GOJJAM WITHOUT INFORMING GIZAW. DIRG MEMBERS ALLEGEDLY THEN PUT A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE ON GIZAW TO ACCEPT PMAC CHIARIMAN'S JOB IN PLACE OF TEFERI, WHICH GIZAW REFUSED CLAIMING THAT HE WAS A SOLDIER, NOT A POLITICIAN. DIRG, HOWEVER, DID PREVAIL ON GIZAW TO RETAIN HIS POST AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF GROUND FORCES BY PROMISING THAT ORDERS TO UNIT COMMANDERS WOULD BE SENT ONLY THROUGH GIZAW'S OFFICE.

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5. SOURCE CONTENDS THAT BG GETACHEW NADEW WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE ABOVE EVENTS AND THAT HIS STATUS REMAINS UNCHANGED. COMMENT. THIS IS THE MOST COHERENT VERSION OF RECENT EVENTS THAT WE HAVE HEARD, COMBINING ALL THE KNOWN ELEMENTS, VIZ., THE ABUNE, GENERAL GIZAW, BG TEFERI AND THE V/CHAIRMEN, IN A PLAUSIBLE SCENARIO. WE WOULD POINT OUT HOWEVER THAT ALLEGED DEFACTO DEMOTION OF V/CHAIRMEN LIKELY HAS NOT ELIMINATED THROUGH IT MAY HAVE REDUCED THEIR RESPECTIVE FACTIONS WITHIN

DIRG. WE WOULD EXCEPT FACTIONS TO CONTINUE TO MANOEUVER  
FOR ADVANTAGE AND INDEED BELIEVE THIS IS A COURSE.  
HUMMEL

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